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DEPT FOR WHA/USOAS SARAH HANKINS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL CA
SUBJECT: CANADIAN VIEWS ON NEXT STEPS ON OAS INDIGENOUS
RIGHTS DECLARATION

REF: STATE 145292

¶11. (SBU) According to Paul Gibbard, Director of the Office of Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada shares our views that the OAS Declaration is ill-conceived and is headed for a "train-wreck." Gibbard said that Canada had a number of concerns with the UN text, and that the OAS resolution proposes even larger commitments. Canada sees the negotiations process as requiring a considerable amount of work, but does not anticipate an eventual consensus, which will be very negative for the OAS as an institution. The GOC will suggest to OAS member states that, as the process is not likely to yield a successful outcome, the best approach would be to back up from the negotiations and look instead closely at the underlying issues, seeking areas where there may be consensus.

¶12. (SBU) Gibbard added that the GOC will be supportive of our proposed "year of action" in principle, but expressed concern that it could lead to commitments that Canada would prefer to avoid. He said that Working Group Chairman Cuadros had been pushing for a two-track process in which the U.S. and Canada would fund projects instead of participating in negotiations. He expressed concern that our proposal could also go in this direction but insisted that the GOC would not be in a position to provide funding unless the OAS makes a clear statement that indigenous rights and issues are a key priority. Gibbard nonetheless promised to consult internally on our proposal and get back to us. In general, he said, Canada sees the potential to work together -- as long as there are no direct fiscal implications.

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